

PORTUGUESE CIVIL WAR REFLECTED BY *ALBINA ROMÂNEASCĂ* / *ROMANIAN BEE* IN 1832

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Abstract

The paper referring to the year 1832 in Portugal reflected in the literary reportage of war from the one of the first Romanian newspapers “*Albina românească*” (“*Romanian Bee*” translated title) edited by Gheorghe Asachi illustrates the idea that the first reportages describing the war from Romanian literature differ from strict journalistic reports by the following elements: the artistic vision and the aesthetic message.

This paper starts the investigation and the selection of the newspaper reportages about Portugal’s civil war belonging to the archive of 1832 first Romanian newspaper called “*Albina românească*” edited by Gheorghe Asachi to illustrate different aspects about the foundation or invention of a new literary genre, one of the species of the literary journalism with a long tradition in Romanian press: the reportage about war.

Disseminated through the first Romanian newspaper 182 years ago, the reportages about Portuguese civil war are grouped together to outline the following aspects:

1. Gheorghe Asachi and his vocation of founder;
2. “*Albina românească*”(1829): the first Romanian publication with a long occurrence;
3. The Reportage about War: Definition and Features;
4. The Artistic Vision and the Aesthetic Message of the Romanian Literary Reportage about Portugal’s Civil War in “*Albina românească*” from 1832;
5. Conclusions;

Key Words: Albina românească, Gheorghe Asachi, Portuguese civil war

1. Gheorghe Asachi and His Vocation as a Pioneer

Classic of Romanian culture, since Romanian literature defined its spiritual evolutionary reference points into the modernity, Gheorghe Asachi exercised his literary talent through an Italian sonnet: *In occasione del volo aerostatico dell'illustre Donne, la signora Blanchard* (*On the occasion of Mme Blanchard's flying by aerostat or air balloon*- translated title) published in *Giornale del Campidoglio* at 26th of December 1811. The author have mentioned in the moment of his Romanian translation of the hendecasyllabic sonnet inspired by Francesco Petrarca, commonly anglicized as Petrarch, that this sonnet was written in Rome in 1811, when on the sky the great comet was seen. Preoccupied with the study of astronomy and mathematics, Gheorghe Asachi just became an extraordinary member of the Literary Society of Rome, after he graduated and publicly sustained his doctor degree thesis and he also graduated engineering and architecture in Lemberg and Lwow. The wife of the hot air balloon pioneer, Jean Pierre Blanchard, named Sophie Blanchard (25 03 1778- 6 07 1819) promoted by Napoleon Bonaparte as “official festival aeronaut”, surnamed “the official aeronaut of the festivals”, remains a symbol of the first woman victim of an aeronautic accident, for in 1819 she was to die during a fire, in the demonstration with the aerostat filled with fireworks pyrotechnic materials. The balloon crashed on the roof of a house in the Rue de Provence. Demonstration was held as usual, from above Tivoli garden in Paris. It was the 67th and final ascension of the mignon French. Inspired by Sophie Blanchard, two writers would have considered her as a main character in their writings: Jules Verne in his first novel *Five Weeks in a Balloon* (1863) and F.M. Dostoyevsky in *The Player* (1867). Unlike Charles Dickens, who had nightmares about ballooning and usually asked himself what kind of link is there between the writers of the serial-story and the drivers of the hot-air balloon, since the audience was expecting something sensational and bad from their imagination, Gheorghe Asachi merged himself with the public who was astonishing looking at the flying by aerostat of Sophie Blanchard, from Rome to Napoli in 1811, and he contemplated the greatness of her ascension when on the 15th of August 1811, at Milan „la Fête de l'Emperor" was celebrated through the

balloon ascension of Napoleon Bonaparte's 42nd anniversary. Gheorghe Asachi made his debut in Romanian literature with the occasional sonnet written in Italian regarding the flying theme, convinced that the message could be considered a motto of his entire activity, that the real perspective over harmony and beauty is a secret revealed only to those chosen to rise through their own spirit and sacrifice (ASACHI 2002a:50).

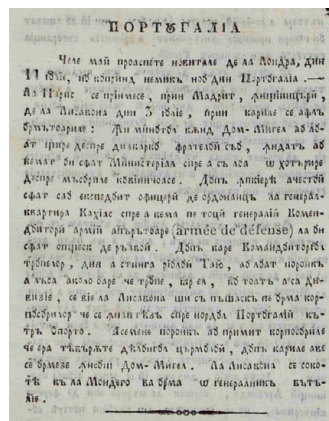
Endowed with a vocation of a cultural guide, with a writer's sensibility, with an architect geometric spirit and with an engineer visionary spirit Gheorghe Asachi remained in the history as an encyclopedic spirit preoccupied by arts, foreign languages classic and modern, mathematics and astronomy. Using courageously his intelligence, Gheorghe Asachi had the power of determining the others to work together with him and to change the reality of the XIXth Romanian century. He founded the national education system up to university level by promoting, in the middle of Phanariot epoch, technical education in Romanian language for engineers to whom he taught between 1813-1818 mathematics, geodesy and architecture in Romanian language. He played an important role in opening up *Școala Normală a Gimnaziului Vasilian* at March 28th 1828, at the inauguration of the „village schools”, at the establishment of the first educational institute for girls from Moldavia in 1834, at the opening at the 16th of June 1835 of Academia Mihăileană, both a high school and a higher learning institute, housing several faculties, as law, philosophy, theology and two classes for painting and architecture, at the establishment in 1836 November 15th of the *Conservatoriu Filarmonic Dramatic*, fundamental institution for the artistic university system in Romania and at the opening in 1841 of the School of Arts and Crafts in Iasi.

Gheorghe Asachi promoted the press in Romanian language, introducing at the 1st of June 1829 „*Albina românească*”/”*Romanian Bee*”- translated title -, the first political and literary newspaper from Moldavia, developing the editorial and graphic production, ruling different publications such as: „*Foaia oficială*” (1832), „*Alăuta românească*” (1837-1838), „*Foaia sătească a Principatului Moldovii*”(1839-1841, 1846-1851), „*Arhiva Albinei pentru arheologie română și industrie*”, „*Gazeta de Moldova*” (1850-1858), „*Patria*” (1858-1859), „*Spiculatorul moldo-român*” (1841), „*Icoana lumii*” (1840-1841; 1845-1846; 1865-1866), „*Calendar pentru români*”, „*Almanahul pentru învățătură și petrecere*” (1847-1869). Gheorghe Asachi was also an example even in the investment field, establishing in 1832 *Institutul*

Albinei/ Bee's Institute – translated title - and *Fabrica de hârtie Petrodava/ The Paper factory Petrodava* – translated title - from Piatra Neamț in 1841.

2. *Romanian Bee* (1829): the First Long Occurrence Romanian Newspaper

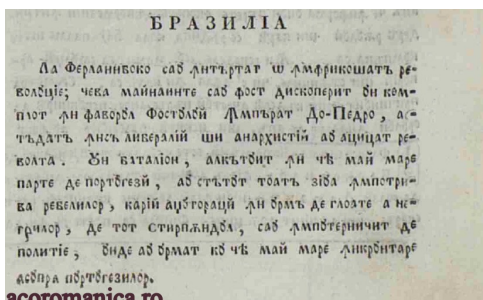
When the literary and Political Newspaper *Romanian Bee* was first printed twice a week in Iasi, the first long occurrence Romanian newspaper, which was published between the 1st of June 1829 till the 3rd of January 1835 and from the 3rd of January 1837 till the 2nd of January 1850, the founder and the manager Gheorghe Asachi choose to cooperate with the following editors: V. Fabian-Bob, Gh. Săulescu, Iancu Codrescu, and with the following permanent contributors: Gheorghe Sion, D. Gusti, Al. Donici, C. Negruzzi, M. Kogălniceanu și V. Alecsandri. As it is shown in the verses of the poem „*Albina și trântorul*”/”*The Bee and the Drone*” – translated title - written in 1829, the author explained the way in which the newspaper was written through collecting the information from various sources.



Albina românească, nr. 062, the 7th August 1832, file 248

„*Albina românească*”/”*Romanian Bee*” - translated title – has also known interrupting in publishing occurrence between the 8th of January – the 7th of December 1833 and between the 30th of June 1835 and the 3rd of January 1837. Since December 1831, some articles are published in French. Since December the 7th 1833, for the international visibility of the publication, the title and the crossheading of the newspaper in Romanian (written with Cyrillic alphabet) were translated into French: „*L’Abeille Moldave: gazette politique et littéraire*”. For an enhanced multiplication of the information spread by the newspaper, various numbers from 1832 are published with free supplements such as the four numbers in January and February 1832 from „*Logofetia cea mare a Principatului Moldovii*” and the 16 numbers from May, June and July 1832 from „*Foaie oficială*”. This consolidation of information through the news gathering, the dissemination, the audience increase and

the diversification of the titles of Romanian publications aimed at any price informing the public opinion about European events of utmost importance.



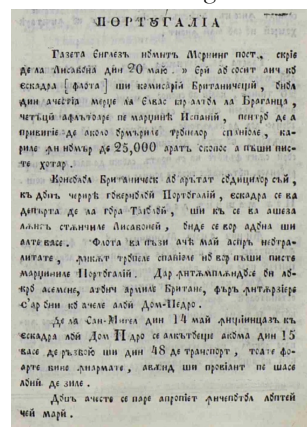
About Brazil in *Albina românească*, 048, the 19th of June 1832, p. 191.

In 1832 the newspaper “*Albina românească*” was structured according to the utmost interesting topics on geo-political zones: England, Germany, Russia, Brazil, Spain. One of these subjects was the Portuguese civil war from 1832, between the troops of Dom Pedro, ex-emperor of Brazil and regent for his daughter Maria da

Glória, and the army of his brother, Dom Miguel, the usurper of the throne of Portugal, the absolute monarch. The Battle was between the liberal forces of Dom Pedro, ruled by Duke de Terceira and the Marshall Saldanha with a number of 12000 combatants, and Miguelist forces with a number of 60000 fighting men ruled by Dom Miguel, Viscount de Montalegre and Viscount de Santa Marta. In *Albina românească*, 048, the 19th of June 1832, p. 191 the author describes the situation from Portugal and Brazil:

”At Pernambuco happened a frightening revolution; Sometimes ago a conspiracy was discovered in behalf of ex-emperor Dom Pedro; the liberals and the anarchists have sparked the riot. A Portuguese battalion stood all the night against the rebels, which were helped by the black crowds; they were all killed and the police empowered and a great conflict follow over the Portuguese people.” (ASACHI1832a:191)

The author mentioned the sources of his war reportages and, particularly, the phase shift regarding the information: the newspaper was published on June the 26th with news from May the 20th 1832. The first Romanian newspaper didn't have war correspondents, and the news was brought together with the newspaper by navigators, which were, at a certain moment in the



Albina românească, nr. 050, the 26th June 1852, p. 199

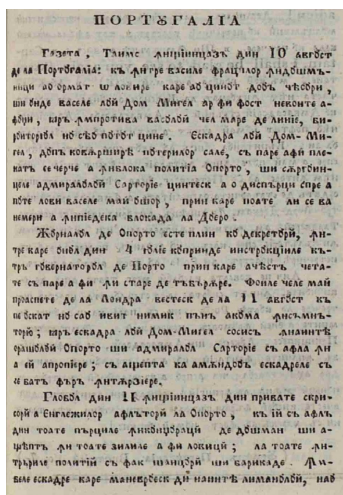
conflict zone. The phonetic orthography of the name of the river Tajo/ Tahoe as in Spanish, precisely because it comes from Greek *tajo*/ τᾱξο = *yew* and Latin *tagus* = *crack, fissure, break*; but he didn't know the Portuguese orthography or utterance of the name of the river Tejo. He explained the neologisms to the reader and created new words: for example *squadron* (Romanian *escadră*) through *navy* (Romanian *flotă*).

The English gazette called *Morning Post* writes from Lisbon from May, the 20th:

«Yesterday came also here by squadron (navy) British emissaries, one of them goes to Elvas, and the other one to Braganza (written phonetically, Bragança- our note L.M.), cities situated near Spain's border, to follow from that point the Spanish troupes composed by 25 000 combatants, whose aim is to invade Portugal.

British consul told to the foreigners (old Romanian term *sudîți* - our note L.M.) that if the Portuguese army would ask, the squadron will leave Tajo's / Taiu's estuary and would come to anchor near Lisbon's rocks, where other ships would land. The navy will keep the neutrality. Because the Spanish ships will not invade Portuguese borders. But, if such a thing would happen, then British army, without delay would join Dom Pedro's army.

From San Migel, May the 14th, there are news about Dom Pedro's squadron composed by 15 war ships and by 48 transport ships, all very well armed.»



Albina românească, 071, the 8th of September 1832, p. 342

We remark the use of the term *sudiți* (which came from Italian *sudito* which denominated in Portugal and in Romanian countries) foreign citizens, with a special jurisdiction, protected by the foreign powers, as a reward for different jobs they did or in exchange for different payments. The first great battle from this Portuguese civil war took place in Ponte Ferreira between the 22nd and the 23rd of July 1832. Although the victory was strategically gained by Dom Pedro, however the enemy's forces were able to regroup and to besiege Dom Pedro's

army in Porto for a year, till August 1833. In the newspaper that Gheorghe Asachi edited, the information about Portugal was published chronologically (Asachi 1832a: 342). The author compiles and shortly comments the information from British, French, Portuguese journals. Before the occurrence of the news agencies in Europe, Gheorghe Asachi found the solution of rapidly spreading of important news through cropping a synthesis from the texts of the newspapers that had war correspondents in Portugal. It is important to mention the fact that the truth of the facts has to be sustained from three different, independent sources. The fact that the great grandmother of France Presse Agency, Havas Agency was founded in 1835, that Associated Press was created in New York in 1846, that Deutsche Presse Agentur was established in Hamburg in 1849, that Reuters Agency was created in 1851 by an ex-employee of Havas Agency, underline the idea that, before these prototypes absolutely necessary to the news industry, Gheorghe Asachi finds a way to keep in touch his readers of Romanian newspaper regarding the civil war topic, the beginning of Portuguese colonial empire's decadence. Electric telegraphic services and messenger pigeons were not used, but the newspapers were brought by sailors who travelled in the conflict zone. This could be an explanation for the informative disparity of this beginning (Asachi, 1832a: 342):

Gazette *Taims* (*Times* – our note L.M.) from the 10th of August from Portugal writes that between the enemy brothers there was a battle that last two

hours and the ships of Dom Miguel had to leave and the great line ship was defeated. Dom Miguel's squadron after this defeating was forced to block Oporto and admiral Sartorie's efforts aim to destroy the blockade and to easier heat the ships and to try to stop the blockade.

Oporto's Journal is full of edicts from which one of the 4th of July contained the instructions that Oporto's governor established during Oporto's blockade. The freshest newspaper from London wrote nothing important happen in the city; Dom Migel's squadron arrived in front of Oporto and the admiral Sartorie was very near; it is expected that both squadron to fight against each-other.

Globul (The Globe – our note L.M.) from the 11th wrote using the information from British private letters that they are surrounded by the enemies and they expected to be attacked. Ditches and barricades are excavated at all Oporto's gates. Both squadrons, in front of the shore, were sailing without any fire or shooting. British ships came to anchor and would not intervene between the enemies' squadrons.

Albionul (*The Albion* - our note L.M.) wrote the following: «From the latest letters, the admiral Sartorie bombed a Spanish commercial ship, which stood between British commercial ships. A Spanish brig came near Sartorie's ship. There was a great dispute spread in Madrid, where it created a profound trouble. Sartorie's action was considered to be instigation, a challenge for Spain to interfere, and as a consequence England would also interfere in this war to support Dom Pedro.

Following London's notices form the 13th of August Dom Migel's squadron came back on August the 6th to Lisbon, where there were no turbulences. Dom Migel asked all the sailors to come to anchor near Portuguese shores and this way he fulfilled Sartorie's plan to block himself (by his own). (ASACHI 1832a:342)

Gheorghe Asachi cropped from the flux of the hottest European reportages of the newspaper that had war correspondents in Portugal, exactly those images important to be understood, because they had the gift to make the readers to fully and realistically live the

war atmosphere. There are in this cold cropped part of the reportages written by Gheorghe Asachi a double filtration of facts' chaining: first of all the reporter's perspective, secondly Romanian journalist's retrospective vision.

3. The War Reportage: Definition and Particularities

From Gheorghe Asachi's point of view, the reportage, this retold story gains the quality to be true through the way in which the author understands the facts: the actions have to be understood by the reader directly from the source. The journalist has to collect, to order and to select information which has to be spread. Gheorghe Asachi quoted the narrations; he didn't relate mediated facts because he was not publishing his own lived experience as a witness or as a war correspondent. Gheorghe Asachi's mission was that of a filter and of a transmitter, well informed by his journalistic lectures, able to synthesize. In Gheorghe Asachi's reportages journalistic information is quoted exactly, accurately and confronted with other sources and inviting the reader to think.

Gheorghe Asachi is one of the first world's journalists which were publishing information about Oporto's blockade, on the base of editorial analyses of war reportages from European newspaper of the moment, thorough comparing and verifying information from at least three sources. The method has to be used even by the other journalists, since John Stuart Mill, for example, wrote also about the topic, on the base of an analyze of English and French newspapers (MILL1832:772-773). John Stuart Mill mentioned the information's contradictions of the French and British allies from the Portuguese civil war, resulting from the fact that British journalists didn't have the habit to read French newspapers.

4. Artistic Vision and Aesthetic Message in Romanian War Reportages about Portugal in 1832 from *Albina românească* / *Romanian Bee*

In his crops from the newspapers, Gheorghe Asachi guided himself following the show's rules, which he abundantly knew. The costumes, the decor, the sounds, the voices, the heroes involved in the action of the reportage follow the rules of the classical

dramaturgy. The action took place in a single place, usually in a single day, chronologically following the five plotting moments: incipit or inciting moment, the plot or the opening problem, the action development or the complication, the climax and the denouement or the ending. This serial structure of Gheorghe Asachi's reportages allowed the informative concentration on spaces strictly typographically limited. The sobriety is Gheorghe Asachi's reportages golden rule. The thinking is mainly visual, the expression is plastic. The writing is alive and the sobriety is a constant. The monograph is completed by the hot information, from the war place, related from the point of view of the great powers involved: Spain, Britain, France, and Portugal. Gheorghe Asachi gave a greater amount to the pro-liberal sources: may be because he was sympathetic with them, may be because it was necessary. Those were the single information sources at a certain moment. Concentrated over the honesty of information and over the sincerity of narration, he was not preoccupied about the topic's imitation. He wrote the documentation of his reportages and the fact is obvious from the way in which he gave supplementary explanations regarding civil war reality and from the orthography. The pronunciations of the proper names, places and explanations of technical terms of military interest as squadron, (old Romanian *escadră*), blockade (old Romanian *blocadă*, *asediu*) or brig, (old Romanian *brig*) came from English sources. Most of the time the pronunciation of the names of the rivers is Spanish, not Portuguese: Tajo/Taho or Douro. These rivers spring in Spain and flow in Atlantic, so the situation is similar to that of calling river Danube as Donau instead of Dunăre when writing about Romanian territories, where the Danube river flows.

As the Portuguese civil war was a long lasting event, the author wrote 19 successive reportages regarding this topic in 1832 (ASACHI1832a-ş). The concrete facts, life's reality are transmitted to Romanian public through selected information in order to inform and make the public more sensitive. The surprising element brought by Gheorghe Asachi in his reportages regards the confronting of the sources. The reader is convinced to compare in order to understand and to select the essential information. The author wrote a sort of a magazine reportage, which links the reader with the actuality, without referring to the immediate reality from the conflict territory. The vast reportage entitled *Portugalia* / *Portugal* - translated title (ASACHI1832f:287,288) narrate Oporto's battle through merging

information from actuality with the introduction into the story of Vice-admiral Sartorius' voice.



Albina românească, 072, the 11st of September 1832, p. 287, 288

In the reportage entitled *Portugal* / Portugal - translated title (ASACHI1832h:300), the author describes Oporto's siege. In another reportage entitled *Portugal* / Portugal - translated title (ASACHI1832j:308) the author used for the reader's mind mobility British sources, referring to the combatants movements. The author introduced in Romanian the English term Oporto, fact demonstrating the source of inspiration in his reportages.

5. Conclusions

Having the privilege of instruction in Italy in his youth, studying Antiquity, neo-classical culture, archeology, the arts' history in Antonio Canova's workshop, where the marble comes to life, Gheorghe Asachi has learned a fundamental principle of creation, which is able to pass from imaginary to the reality level: sculpting the marble or cutting a piece of information for the viewer or reader must feel what the author heard, saw, understood and felt.

Alternating the perspectiveplans with those containing details, weaving specific phrases with those containing technical terms by insisting over the action and the

characters in action, translating information by long descriptive phrases alternating with short sentences containing essential emotion and information, by introducing descriptions of some correspondents and testimonies of combatants, the author structure his war story using paragraph, a structure that provides the visibility and legibility. Gheorghe Asachi didn't use images or lithography to illustrate his reportages about the civil war in Portugal and for confirming the authenticity of information. The titles have the function to inform and to draw attention to a public, who for the first time in his history has the opportunity to find out about Portugal from the news reflected in this newspaper. The author adapted the neologisms in his reportages. The vitality of Gheorghe Asachi's texts comes from Latin modernization of the language made *avant la lettre*.

The slice of life that the author transmitted is unique, because as a journalist, Gheorghe Asachi was a cultivated man, an intellectual preoccupied about education of his people. His destiny protected him, giving the time to make researches in the treasures of the Vatican libraries and archives, to study poetry, to visit literary salons of his age... Less read, too little quoted, his reportages are models of writing, able to be discovered today, through the program of the most modern and also fashionable Romanian library of our time: Metropolitan library of Bucharest or Biblioteca Digitală a Bucureștilor, a modern institution which site is accessible on the following address: <http://digitool.dc.bmms.ro:8881/R>.

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